

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-02 CU-02 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07
EPG-02 FAA-00 /070 W
-----091129Z 093024 /15

R 090906Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7550

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: POLICE, RADICALS CLASH AT NARITA AIRPORT

SUMMARY. SOME FOUR HUNDRED PERSONS WERE INJURED OVER PAST WEEKEND IN CLASHES BETWEEN RIOT POLICE AND RADICALS PROTESTING OPENING OF NEW TOKYO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. ASSAULTED BY MOLOTOV COCKTAILS AND STONES, POLICE WERE FORCED TO RESORT TO TEAR GAS TO QUELL DEMONSTRATORS, RESULTING IN SERIOUS INJURY TO ONE DEMONSTRATOR. ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION MOVEMENT HAS HAD LITTLE PUBLIC SUPPORT OVER PAST DECADE, POLICE METHODS HAVE AROUSED SOME CRITICISM WHICH COULD TARNISH REPUTATION FOR ORDERLY CONTROL. CLASHES LIKELY TO CONTINUE. ENDSUMMARY.

1. IN LARGEST-SCALE CLASH SINCE 1971, WHEN THREE RIOT POLICE WERE KILLED, MORE THAN FOUR HUNDRED PERSONS WERE INJURED IN WEEKEND BATTLE BETWEEN RIOT POLICE AND RADICALS
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PROTESTING GOJ DECISION TO OPEN NEW TOKYO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT NARITA (ABOUT FORTY MILES EAST OF TOKYO) BY END OF YEAR. AIRPORT, WHICH WAS COMPLETED IN 1973, HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF SHARP CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LOCAL FARMERS AND RADICAL STUDENTS ON ONE HAND AND GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES ON OTHER SINCE 1966 GOJ DECISION TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION.

2. IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF WEEKEND DISTURBANCES WAS SURPRISE REMOVAL MAY 6, UNDER COURT ORDER, OF TWO STEEL TOWERS, ERECTED BY PROTESTERS AT EITHER END OF RUNWAY, WHICH HAD BECOME SYMBOLIC OF OPPOSITION STRUGGLE. REMOVAL, UNDER GUARD OF SEVERAL THOUSAND RIOT POLICE, BROUGHT FORTH IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AT SIDE FROM PROTESTERS, MOSTLY HELMETED PERENNIAL STUDENTS BELONGING TO ANTI-JCP MARXIST FACTIONS, WHO REPEATEDLY ATTACKED POLICE WITH MOLOTOV COCKTAILS, STICKS AND STONES. POLICE INITIALLY DEFENDED THEMSELVES WITH WATER GUNS, BUT WERE FORCED TO USE TEAR GAS WHEN DEMONSTRATORS FAILED TO DISPERSE.

3. BATTLE ESCALATED MAY 8, WHEN PROTESTERS, USING GUERILLA TACTICS, ROLLED TWO FLAMING CARS INTO ADVANCING RIOT POLICE. CAUGHT IN TIGHT POSITION, POLICE SOON AFTER FIRED TEAR GAS CANNISTERS POINT BLANK AT DEMONSTRATORS, FRACTURING SKULL OF ONE WHO REMAINS ON CIRITICAL LIST. SOME DAMAGE WAS ALSO CAUSED TO PRIVATE BUILDINGS AND VEHICLES. SPORADIC ATTACKS CONTINUED ON POLICE OUTPOSTS IN VICINITY MAY 9 AND HEADQUARTERS OF AIRPORT CORPORATION, LOCATED NEAR EMBASSY, HAS BEEN TARGET OF ATTACK. DESPITE CONTINUING RADICAL ACTIVITY, HOWEVER, JCAB COMMENCED TEST FLIGHTS MAY 7 AND PLANS TO CONTINUE THEM THIS WEEK.

4. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH RADICAL STUDENT-LED PROTESTERS HAVE SLOWED CONSTRUCTION AND PREVENTED OPENING OF NARITA FOR SOME YEARS, THEY HAVE HAD LITTLE PUBLIC SUPPORT BECAUSE, UNLIKE SECURITY TREATY-RELATED ISSUES WITH DEEP-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEATED EMOTIONAL OVERTONES, THEIR PROTEST WAS NARROWLY IDEOLOGICAL ONE OF WORKER-FARMER-STUDENT STRUGGLE AGAINST CLASS ENEMY. NEVERTHELESS, SURPRISE POLICE MOVE AND RESULTANT CASUALTIES HAVE AROUSED SOME CRITICISM OF POLICE TACTICS, AND RIOT POLICE REPUTATION FOR ORDERLY CONTROL, SO CAREFULLY NURTURED OVER PAST SEVERAL YEARS, MAY HAVE BEEN TARNISHED. PROSPECT NOW IS THAT SPORADIC CLASHES BETWEEN POLICE AND RADICALS WILL CONTINUE. SHOESMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, CIVIL DISORDERS, AIRPORTS, STUDENTS
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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From: TOKYO
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Release Event: n/a
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLICE, RADICALS CLASH AT NARITA AIRPORT SUMMARY. SOME FOUR HUNDRED PERSONS WERE INJURED OVER PAST WEEKEND IN CLASHES BETWEEN RIOT POLICE AND RA
TAGS: PINT, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3a65c397-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009